

Cultural Quarter

The Cultural Quarter is already seeing significant investment through the renovation and expansion of the museum and the development of a start-up hub for creative industries at the Vulcan Works. Other development opportunities at Swan Street, Albion Place and Guildhall Road are proposed to further broaden the appeal of this area.

Swan Street

As a distinct destination characterised by creative businesses and institutions, the Quarter deserves its own public space for events or social gatherings. Creating a public space off Swan Street, would improve the setting and frontage to the Premier Inn hotel. This site could also accommodate commercial offices.

24 Guildhall Road

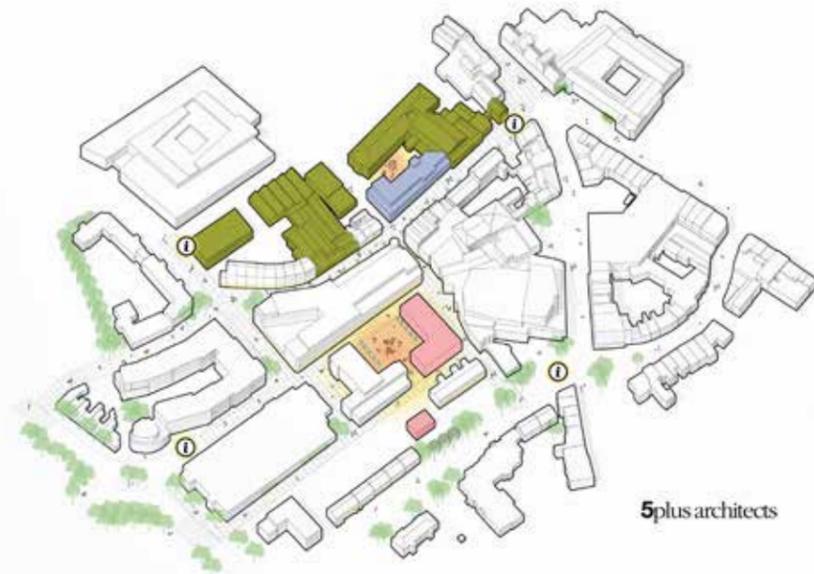
The former County Council office building at 24 Guildhall Road, opposite the Royal & Derngate, is currently empty and must find a new purpose to ensure the sustainable growth of the Cultural Quarter. The Borough Council is currently exploring ideas for cultural uses.

Albion Place Area

A boutique hotel to diversify the current hotel offer within the Quarter, a high end residential development reflecting the history of the street, or a small business premises is suggested for this street.

Other improvements suggested to the area include extending the pedestrian focused streetscape on Guildhall Road to the rest

of the Cultural Quarter, re-landscaping the lower part of Guildhall Road to match the upper part of the road, introducing a shared surface route along the northern section of Swan Street to give priority to pedestrians, enhancing mature trees and planting and improving the Angel Street entrance to the Royal & Derngate.



Marefair

This area creates a first impression for visitors coming from the train station, with Marefair and Gold Street acting as a main route into the heart of the town.

A comprehensive approach to shop-front and tenant signage design on Marefair and Gold Street would help tone down the busy ground floor frontages and give greater presence to the historic façades above, along with improved street and building lighting and the activation of building frontages to reduce the number of dead spaces on the route.

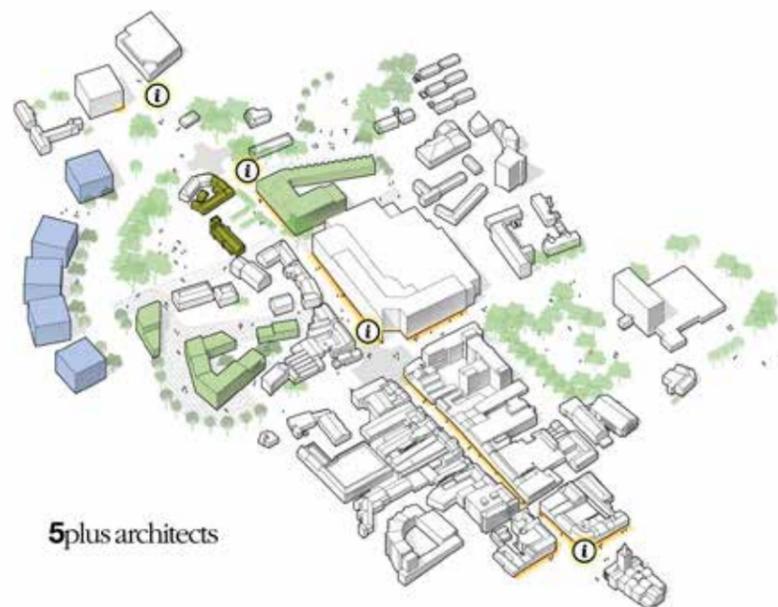
The vacant Castle House site and adjoining surface car parks could be transformed into a heritage gateway development that highlights the area's important historic landmarks, including St Peter's Church and the site of Northampton Castle.

The Churches Conservation Trust and Borough Council have already proposed to renovate the historic Black Lion pub to create a heritage visitor's centre.

On the Castle House site, a residential building, which reinforces the historic Marefair streetscape, along with a new park linking to the castle remains, would help to reinforce this heritage gateway.

The Green

Two surface car parks surrounded by small industrial businesses on Freeschool Street make the area feel fragmented. Introducing further residential development here would help create a more established neighbourhood and a safe urban environment, while giving a new purpose to the existing open green space behind St Peter's Church.



Four Waterside Enterprise Zone

The Four Waterside Enterprise Zone site presents a significant gateway development opportunity to provide high-quality commercial office space and a business destination would stimulate economic growth.

TOWN CENTRE NEWS

October 2019

Town Centre Masterplan unveiled

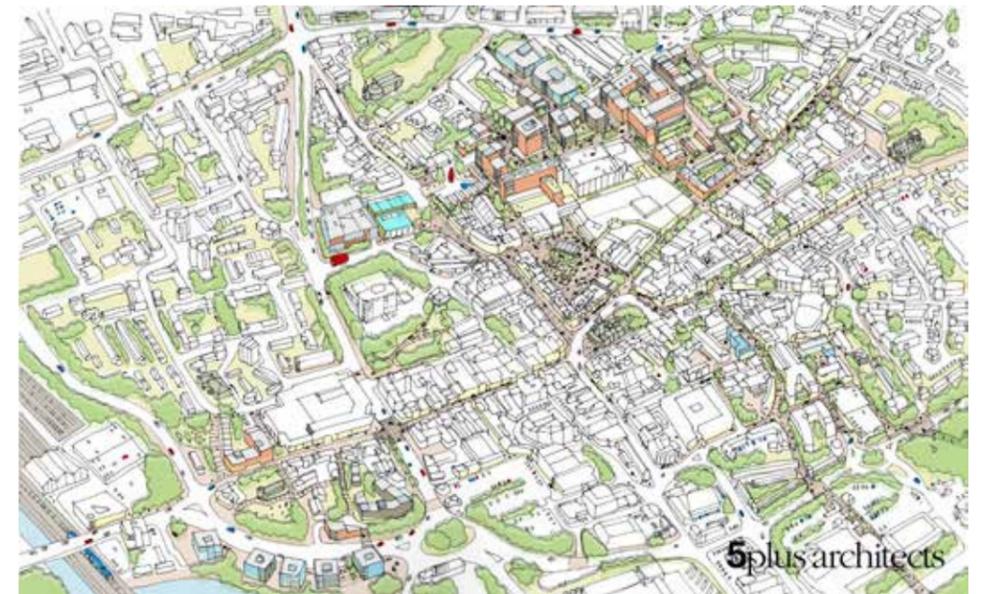
A detailed masterplan for the town centre, commissioned by Northampton Forward, is now available following analysis of results from the public consultation on the draft plan earlier in the year.

Within the plan, regeneration experts 5plus Architects have identified five areas in the town – the Market Square, Greyfriars, Abington Street, the Cultural Quarter and Marefair - and provided detailed suggestions of how each could be improved.

The masterplan vision of transforming Northampton town centre into a vibrant and attractive place, where people can live, work and enjoy life to the fullest, is based around the key principles of transforming the heart of the town, building a smaller and stronger retail core, creating a residential community and enhancing the town's culture, history and heritage.

The main themes of heritage, retail, food and beverage, appearance, community, green spaces, pedestrianisation, leisure and residential identified from the consultation results are also addressed within the masterplan.

This month's Town Centre News gives an overview of the main suggestions for each area, but to view the masterplan, please visit: northampton.gov.uk/tcmasterplan



Market Square

The Market Square is the most important public space in the whole of Northamptonshire, but extensive, high-quality public realm regeneration is needed to reinstate its civic value. The square should be a destination in its own right, providing a comfortable setting for people to meet and relax.

The following proposals aim to reposition Market Square at the centre of a stronger consolidated retail core and re-establish it as the heart of the town centre.

A new focal point is proposed for the square to create a more inspiring retail experience. Suggestions include a performance area, bandstand or fountain. This could support specialist traders, independent restaurants, bars and produce markets.

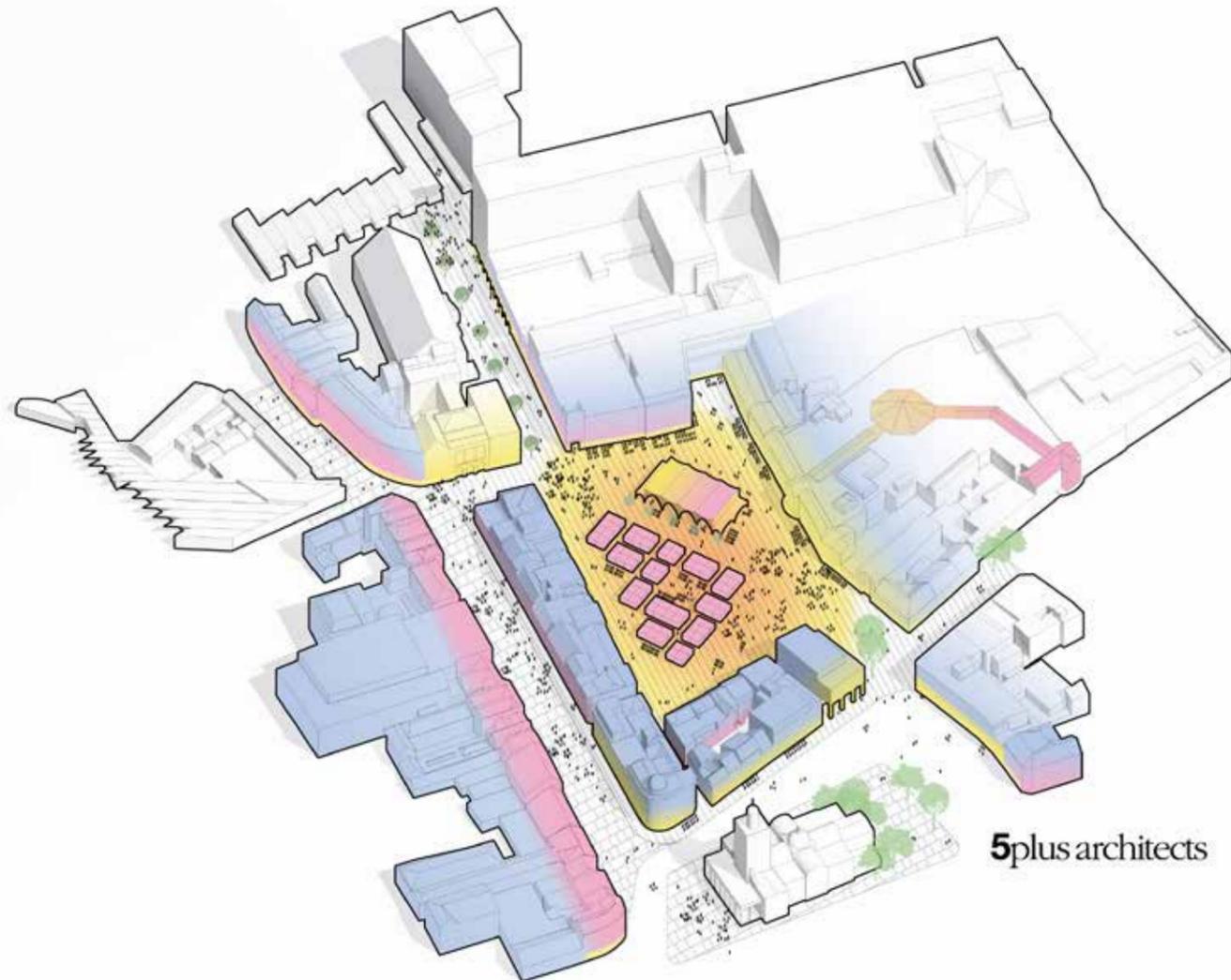
Reconfiguring the layout of existing stalls would open up a primary route running diagonally from the north-west corner down to the south-east corner of the Market Square.

This new layout would encourage better access, greater footfall and more flexible space, to allow for an integrated water feature, specialist trading markets, events, seasonal activities and temporary amusements.

Pivotal to the identity of Market Square is the market itself. Transforming the existing stalls to provide a more attractive and future-proofed platform for independent traders would encourage greater footfall and bring a new demographic into the space.

Introducing more restaurants and bars into the ground floors of historic buildings around the square would create a vibrant ecosystem of supportive businesses and ensure the square is active at all times of the day. Upper floors could be reconfigured to provide new opportunities for start-up business workspaces.

Improvements will be historically sensitive in order to benefit the architectural setting of the square. Enhancements must complement the impressive building façades lining the square.



Drapery

The Drapery could be revived as a key shopping area for the town centre and a much healthier street, by removing bus bays and stands, restricting traffic and prioritising pedestrians, which would reconnect the town centre with Sheep Street. The ground floors of buildings located on the eastern edge of Drapery could be opened up to allow businesses to trade all the way through to Market Square.

Emporium Way

Emporium Way is the covered alleyway next to Boots which links the market square to the lower level of the Mayorhold car park. Demolition of the vacant building which sits above the entrance to the walkway would open it up and establish a new connection between the Square and Greyfriars. The route would be landscaped and include retail frontages.

Greyfriars

The Greyfriars site presents a major regeneration opportunity to reconnect the northern part of the town centre area with the core. The opening up of Emporium Way and equal levelling of paths and highways infrastructure would create new vistas which encourage movement between Greyfriars and the Market Square.

The masterplan suggests creating a large scale urban neighbourhood with a tall, landmark building at its centre, accompanied by landscaping, functional open spaces and movement corridors, while commercial or civic office developments are recommended at Victoria Street.

A recent feasibility study for the site found that residential accommodation was the most financially viable development option. However, in order to include a mix of uses and integrate the site into the wider town, public sector funding would be required.

Changes to Greyfriars Road to create a linear park

Changing the layout of the roads around the Greyfriars site will allow for convenient

walking and cycling routes to be created across the site and into the town centre. These routes would be interspersed by a new sequence of distinctive public spaces running along the route of the former road to create a linear park.

Bus and coach interchange

A new interchange would receive buses and coaches which currently stop along the Drapery and Victoria Street. This would

allow the Drapery to be bus free and re-establish itself as a high-quality retail destination.

Redevelopment of the Mayorhold Multi-Storey Car Park

Currently underutilised, this car park can be rebuilt into a smaller footprint, to free up space for the construction of a leisure and recreation building which would serve the new town centre residents.



Abington Street

The masterplan proposes to redefine this struggling part of the town centre into a new residential neighbourhood known as the Eastgate Quarter.

The creation of new neighbourhoods in the area of Wellington Street and Albert Place, with ground floor living accommodation and front doors would eliminate dead spaces to ensure a safe and welcoming environment is established.

Spreading leisure, food and beverage units in these streets would help support an evening economy which would benefit the town centre as a whole, while neighbourhoods would be linked by shared surface pedestrian and cycle networks.

Abington Street

Many existing retail units along Abington Street are now redundant and the large retail units once occupied by Marks & Spencer and BHS will be difficult to reuse as shops. Converting these units into apartments, flats and mews houses would supporting the creation of a new town centre neighbourhood.

Along Abington Street, pavements would be widened to accommodate external seating for restaurants as well as providing sufficient circulation for pedestrians to pass naturally without feeling hemmed in. Dynamic lighting and public artwork could create destinations out of overlooked routes and spaces.

Fish Street

Expanding on the leisure, food and drink provision already offered in Fish Street will ensure that it remains an important link between Abington Street and St Giles' Street. Building refurbishments, should also be explored to encourage new and exciting tenants to settle in the area, along with public realm improvements.

St Giles' Street

An emphasis on independent traders in the ground floor units on St Giles' Street would help to create a new identity based on a unique retail experience. Above the ground floor, alternative uses such as residential and commercial office space are proposed, to help embed daylong activity into the town centre.

